

MAY SEEK CHANGE IN CITY CHARTER

Committee Will Consider Adviseability of New Form of Government.

Times-Dispatch, Bureau, 5 Bollingbrook Street, (Phone 1485).

Petersburg, Va., January 23.—At a special meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the City of Petersburg, held last night, committees were named for the coming year, and all special committees, suggested in President Hatcher Seward's recent annual report for important, special work were appointed and made regular standing committees. Among the special committees, suggested in the report, was one to study the question of municipal government and make report as to the advisability of changes in the city charter, as to the appointment of an administrative board to take charge of the management of the city, and the adoption of a simpler form of government, and other matters of interest connected with our local government.

The committee on municipal government is as follows: H. H. Mann, chairman; Samuel W. Zimmer, T. F. Heath, W. E. Harris, and Walter N. Jones.

The various other committees announced, composed of active business and professional men, were as follows: Agriculture—S. H. Turner, chairman; William Grossmann, Alexander Hamilton, George W. Harrison, J. McRulph.

Business Enterprises—N. T. Patterson, Jr., chairman; E. Elgert, H. H. Mann, Paul Roper, W. L. Zimmer.

Health and Sanitation—G. C. Wright, chairman; W. E. Armstrong, C. L. Guthrie, Bernard Mann, Dr. J. G. Rennie.

Information and Statistics—J. W. Long, chairman; P. M. Pollard, Charles Heinemann, B. B. Jones, R. L. Watson.

Improvement of Appomattox River—George Cameron, Jr., chairman; T. M. Davis, John A. Gill, T. F. Parsons, H. L. Smith.

Legislation—P. H. Drowry, chairman; Alexander D. Hamilton, E. H. Patterson, Charles E. Plummer, W. L. Zimmer, Jr.

Membership—F. M. Dalton, chairman; Robert Canalis, W. E. Poole, E. C. Kent, T. Y. Snyder.

Roads, Streets and Parks—Charles T. Lassiter, chairman; James E. Cuthbert, J. M. Newcomb, Dr. William J. Scher, John E. Harvill.

Street Lighting—E. C. Kent, chairman; R. W. Price, R. T. Matson, O. W. Mattox, L. A. Rosenstock.

Trade Extension—W. W. Warren, chairman; Frank M. Hobbs, M. Lavenstein, R. E. Lunsford, W. H. Will.

Traffic and Transportation—J. W. Brown, chairman; A. W. Gray, Henry L. Plummer, H. P. Stratton, W. A. Totty.

Battlefield Park—R. H. Mann, W. B. McVane, W. E. Poole, H. L. Smith, S. H. Turner.

The board of governors received information from Secretary Martin that material for an addition to the freight depot of the Seaboard Railway, on Market Street, of 100x50 feet had been shipped and that work would soon be commenced.

Information as to the establishment of a national battlefield park at Petersburg was favorable, and work to this end will be pushed.

The death last night of E. R. Beckwith in his home on Market Street removes from the city one of its most honored citizens and prominent business men. Mr. Beckwith had been engaged in the drug business for forty years, which he entered soon after he came out of the war. He was a man of high character and integrity and universally esteemed. Mr. Beckwith was sixty-seven years old, and was the son of the late Dr. T. S. Beckwith.

He was the grandson of Edmund Ruffin. He was a brother of Bishop John W. Beckwith, of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia, and of the Right Rev. C. V. Beckwith, the present Bishop of Alabama. He is survived by his wife and two daughters—Miss Mamie and Agnes of this city—by four sisters—Misses M. S. M. E. K. D., of Petersburg, and Mrs. John R. Cary, of Richmond—and by two

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brothers—Bishop C. M. Beckwith, of Alabama, and T. S. Beckwith, of this city. He was a Confederate Veteran, a member of A. P. Hill Camp and a Mason.

Negro Convicts Escape.

Three negro convicts employed on the road work in Chesterfield county, and almost killed their guard last night, and made their escape. Their names are William Price and John Forby, sent up from Prince George, and William Smith, from Northumberland. The force has been at work for some time on the Hickory Road, a few miles beyond Ettrick, and was in charge of Guard Belcher, a citizen of the county. Seizing a favorable opportunity, the three negroes made a combined assault on Mr. Belcher, falling him to the ground by blows on the head with clubs, fracturing his skull in front and leaving him insensible on the ground. They robbed Belcher of his gun and pistol, and thus armed fled from the camp. On the public road they held up and robbed several white and colored persons whom they met, using the gun and pistol to enforce submission. The police of the city, South Richmond and Richmond were promptly notified of the affair and asked to keep a lookout for the convicts. A posse was organized in Ettrick and went in pursuit of the negroes, but did not get a view of them. They have not yet been caught.

Dr. J. Helling Jones, of this city, was called to attend Mr. Belcher, who discovered that his skull was fractured. Mr. Belcher was brought to the hospital in this city to-day, where it was decided to perform an operation for his relief. His condition is serious. The negroes were reported in Crewe this morning, but escaped arrest.

Report on Cotton Ginned.

Washington, January 23.—The vast 1911 cotton crop of the United States had been ginned and baled to the extent of 14,510,674 bales on January 16, according to the Census Bureau's report issued to-day, showing 153,874 bales were ginned during the period from January 1 to 15 inclusive. Ginning this season have been forced to greater activities than ever before by the enormous crop. A considerable quantity still remains to be ginned before the close of the season. The exact amount will be made known by the Census Bureau's final ginning report March 26, giving figures up to February 25.

To-day's ginning report is about 75,000 bales less than the Department of Agriculture's estimate of production, which was 14,585,000 of 500 pounds gross weight.

POLICEMAN ENDS LIFE

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.) Big Stone Gap, Va., January 23.—Joseph Wax, night policeman, shot himself through the head last night at 7 o'clock in the city jail. He died in a few minutes. He left a note for his wife, saying he was despondent. In notes found on his person stated he wanted no one to blame her in any way for his rash act and that she had been a good wife in every way.

REPEATS CHARGE AGAINST BANKS

Mayor Riddick Attempts to Prove He Is Not an American Citizen.

MEMBER OF LEGISLATURE

In Letter Tells of Investigation Made of Baltimore Records.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

Norfolk, Va., January 23.—The latest development in the controversy between Mayor James G. Riddick and members of the House of Delegates in the Virginia Legislature, Benjamin A. Banks, is a letter from the Mayor in which he gives details to prove his assertion made several days ago that Mr. Banks is not an American citizen and has no right to his seat in the Legislature.

Mr. Banks replying to the Mayor's original charge, issued a statement in which he claimed to have been born in Baltimore twenty-four years ago. The man who furnished the Mayor his affidavit that Mr. Banks was not an American citizen went to Baltimore and employed attorneys to look up the records of the family. The finding are embodied in a letter the Mayor has just mailed to Mr. Banks at Richmond, which is as follows:

"Hon. B. A. Banks, State Capitol, Richmond, Va.:
"My Dear Sir.—Over your signature in the January 2, 1912, issue of the Virginia Pilot, there appeared a statement signifying your deep disapproval of my suggestion that you might not be a duly qualified voter. I had questioned your naturalization and you took issue with me.

"I quote from your statement: 'The charge is utterly false, and may have arisen from the fact that several of my brothers were born abroad, and one of these latter died in infancy in Baltimore, before I was born.'

"It is naturally the height of presumption to place in such a position to your word such a trifle as the official records, but I am constrained to do so. The death records of Baltimore disclose the fact that Fanny Bonk, an infant child of Elias and Rache Bonk, died in Baltimore on June 30, 1891, and a search of those records fails to reveal any other death in your family, except that of your father.

"Again I quote from your statement: 'I am a native-born American citizen, born in Baltimore, Md., twenty-four years ago.'

"Unfortunately the official records are at variance with your assertion. The United States Treasury Department certifies that your mother, Rache Bonk, and five children, Leiba, Eliza, Abraham, Scholom, and Leiba, arrived in Baltimore on July 19, 1889, from Bremen. The name Benjamin A. Banks does not appear among the five, but the same authority reports that Belle Brodovitz, afterwards Belle Krausz, arrived on the same boat, at the same time, and Mr. Krausz states that you were at that time known as Abraham Bonk; that he knew you then and has known you ever since; that she has visited you in Portsmouth and Norfolk, and that she knows you to be the boy who was Abraham Bonk. An affidavit from another source in Baltimore verifies this statement.

"I further quote from your signed statement: 'The records will show that my father, dead many years, a practicing physician in Baltimore was a voter in that city before I was born.' This is a statement which you made before you were born; but your statement here appears to be in error. The United States Treasury records show that your father, Elias Bonk, arrived in America, at the port of New York, on September 11, 1888, and the health records of Baltimore show that he died in this city on July 2, 1891. He, therefore, could not have been a voter since he had not lived in this country long enough to obtain his naturalization papers. Furthermore, he was not a practicing physician in that city so far as the authorities know, and it is understood that he did practice a profession somewhat in the nature of midwifery, although his death certificate gives no occupation. On this subject you were doubtless misinformed.

"But the same charitable view can scarcely be entertained in respect to the other misstatements. You say that you were born in this country, while the records show that you were born in Russia, and that you did not come to this country until you were three and a half years old. That is an impressionable age for a child, and it is inconceivable that you would have forgotten the long sea voyage.

"You say that one of your brothers died in Baltimore before you were born, while the records of that city attest the death of a sister as the only child of the family who died there. You were over five years old when your sister died, and must have been able to discriminate between a sister and a brother.

"You say that you were born in Baltimore twenty-four years ago. The records show that your mother did not arrive in this country until the 10th day of July, 1889, or two years after you claim as the date of your native birth.

"There are many of your fellow Russians now in this city. Among them are a number of our most estimable citizens. Are you ashamed of your birthplace? You may have some other way of proving citizenship than the Virginia Pilot interview; but there would seem to be no way that you could venture to continue claiming American birth. The testimony on that point is unsatisfactory.

"Very truly yours,
(Signed)
"JAMES G. RIDDICK, M. D., Mayor."

The controversy between Mayor Riddick and Mr. Banks started last fall, when Mr. Banks, as a member of the Board of Aldermen of this city, got through the Council an appropriation for street extension which the Mayor vetoed and called for an investigation. Mr. Banks was accorded a vote of confidence, and the measure was adopted over the Mayor's veto.

At the convention of the Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association in Richmond last October, Mayor Riddick made a speech, in which he was reported to have said if he thought there was an ounce of Northern blood in his heart he would cut a vein and let it out. Alderman Banks introduced a resolution in the Board of Aldermen censuring the Mayor's utterance, but it was not adopted.

Now comes the light of the Mayor to have Mr. Banks unseated from the

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House of Delegates of the State Legislature.

Banks Answers Mayor.

When Mayor Riddick's letter was shown to Mr. Banks last night by a reporter for The Times-Dispatch, he seemed little interested, but remarked that the Norfolk executive might have done him the courtesy to send him a copy. He had, he said, already made a statement to the effect that he was born in Baltimore, which, he insists, is true.

"Even had I not been born in America," said Mr. Banks, "I would still be a citizen, for my stepfather is a citizen of Norfolk, where I have lived for twenty-one years, and as I spent the requisite number of years of my minority there, I would still have all the rights of citizenship. I think it is generally understood that the Mayor is unbalanced.

"His animus arises from the criticism I made of his speech in Richmond at the meeting of the Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association, where

ASHLAND NEWS NOTES

Ashland, Va., January 23.—John Addison, Jr., has returned to Catawba, after spending the week-end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Addison.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Seber, of Philadelphia, are guests of Mrs. Carol Bodeker.

Mrs. William Tyler and children, of Sligo, are visiting Mrs. Hill Carter.

Miss Marvella Ellett visited friends in Richmond this week-end. She was under the name of David Hendrick & Co., and was well known in shipping and commercial circles. Mr. Hendrick, who had been in indifferent health for some time, was forty-eight years old.

FISHER—Died, at her residence, 210 North Second Street, Tuesday morning, 10:15. MRS. KATHERINE M. FISHER, the widow of Daniel B. Fisher, in the fifth year of her age.

Funeral notice later. Newark, N. J., papers please copy.

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Deaths

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BOOKER—Died, at the home of his mother, 412 North Twenty-seventh Street, January 11, 1912, EDWARD F. BOOKER, aged five years and seven months. Interment was made in Oakwood Cemetery.

HEADRICK—Died, at Glasgow, Scotland, on the 6th inst, DAVID HEADRICK, for many years manager in the United States for Messrs. Laidlaw, Mackill & Co., Ltd., sheep dip and insecticide manufacturers. On his return to Glasgow some years ago he entered the shipping business under the name of David Hendrick & Co., and was well known in shipping and commercial circles. Mr. Hendrick, who had been in indifferent health for some time, was forty-eight years old.

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Mrs. A. WEIDMAN, of 403 E. Thompson St., Maryville, Mo., writes: "The nerve in my leg was destroyed five years ago, and left me with a jerking at night so that I could not sleep. A friend told me to try your liniment and now I could not do without it. I find after its use I can go to sleep."

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